

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 DHA-02
OC-06 CCO-00 SY-05 A-01 OPR-02 AID-05 PC-01
SCS-03 SCA-01 OMB-01 ACDA-07 MCT-01 ARA-06 CU-02
TRSE-00 EB-08 /136 W

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O R 261540Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3265

AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY KIGALI

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

SECDEF WASH DC

DIA WASH DC

USMISSION NATO

AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

S E C R E T KINSHASA 3962

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, PINS, AEMR, CG, AO

SUBJECT: SHABA INVASION: GENERAL ASSESSMENT (APRIL 26)

1. SUMMARY: MOBUTU'S FORTUNES CONTINUE TO IMPROVE. THE COMBINED
FAZ-MOROCCAN UNITS HAVE MADE ADDITIONAL HEADWAY AGAINST THEIR
ENEMY, AND MOBUTU DREW A CROWD TO A STUDENT RALLY TO DISPLAY
TWO POW'S BEFORE BEGINNING A TRIUMPHANT TOUR OF THE FRONT, TO

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THE ACCOMPANIMENT OF INCREASINGLY STRIDENT ANTI-SOVIET RHETORIC
WHICH CONTINUES TO YIELD DIVIDENDS. THERE WAS NO SIGN OF
PROGRESS TOWARD NEGOTIATIONS DURING THE PAST WEEK. END SUMMARY.

2. MILITARY. ALTHOUGH THE SECONDARY FAZ OFFENSIVE SOUTHWEST
OF KAMINA APPEARS TO BE STALLED BY ENEMY RESISTANCE IN THE
VICINITY OF KAFAKUMBA, THE PRINCIPAL EFFORT ALONG THE KOLWEZI-

DILOLO AXIS HAS BEEN HARASSED MORE BY MUD THAN BY ENEMY FIRE. THE INVADERS APPEAR TO BE IN DISARRAY; WE MAY, HOWEVER, SIMPLY BE WITNESSING A TACTICAL WITHDRAWAL. IT IS TOO EARLY TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE INVADERS INTEND (AND WILL BE ABLE) TO:

- MELT INTO THE BUSH TO MAINTAIN A LOW-LEVEL INSURGENCY;
- PULL BACK ACROSS THE ANGOLAN BORDER TO AWAIT THE MOROCCAN WITHDRAWAL; OR
- RETREAT TOWARD THE BORDER TO STRETCH OUT MOBUTU'S FORCES BEFORE COUNTER-ATTACKING, POSSIBLY WITH ANGOLAN/CUBAN ASSISTANCE.

3. POLITICAL. MOBUTU AGAIN DEMONSTRATED HIS ABILITY TO TURN OUT A CROWD DURING A YOUTH RALLY LAST WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20. THE KEY ATTRACTION, A PAIR OF ALLEGED EX-KATANGAN MERCENARIES, PROVED AN INCOMPLETE SUCCESS. SUITABLY DENOUNCED BY THE CROWD, THE PRISONERS WERE NOT ENTIRELY PERSUASIVE DURING A SUBSEQUENT PRESS INTERVIEW IN THEIR REMARKS ABOUT CUBANS WHO ALLEGEDLY CROSSED THE BORDER WITH THEM INTO SHABA. NEVERTHELESS, BUOYED BY THE RALLY AND "PROOF" OF THE CUBAN PRESENCE IN SHABA, MOBUTU WENT OFF ON A TOUR OF THE FRONT TO VISIT TERRAIN RE-CAPTURED FROM HIS ADVERSARIES. IN ADDITION TO THE COERCIVE APPARATUS AT HIS DISPOSAL, MOBUTU HAS BENEFITED POLITICALLY FROM THE INABILITY OF HIS OPPONENTS TO SUBORDINATE THEIR DIFFERENCES TO THEIR COMMON OBJECTIVE OF REMOVING HIM FROM POWER. IN THE ABSENCE OF A COHERENT, UNITED OPPOSITION CAPABLE OF ORCHESTRATING A PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN WITHIN ZAIRE AND ABROAD, MOBUTU WILL REMAIN IN THE EYES OF MANY THE LESSER OF TWO EVILS.

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4. DIPLOMATIC. NIGERIA'S MEDIATION EFFORT IS EXPECTED TO GET UNDERWAY AGAIN WITH FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMISSIONER GARBA'S TRIP TO KINSHASA THIS WEEK. GARBA WILL BE UNABLE TO SEE NETO, HOWEVER, UNTIL THE LATTER RETURNS FROM HIS VISITS TO YUGOSLAVIA AND POLAND. DESPITE HIS RECOGNITION OF STRONG OPPOSITION IN LUANDA TO NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN ANGOLA AND ZAIRE, GARBA IS REPORTED TO BE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT ONCE MOBUTU SUCCEEDS IN CRUSHING THE KATANGANS. GARBA IS THINKING SERIOUSLY ABOUT EMPLACEMENT OF AN OAU BORDER POLICE FORCE AS A MAJOR ELEMENT IN A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT, AND IS PRIMARILY CONCERNED ABOUT CONTINUED BORDER VIOLATIONS BY FLEC. HIS ASSUMPTION THAT MOBUTU WILL SUCCEED IN ELIMINATING THE KATANGAN THREAT, RATHER THAN HAVING TO REMAIN AS CONCERNED ABOUT IT AS NETO IS WITH REGARD TO FLEC, FOR EXAMPLE, STRIKES US AS PREMATURE.

5. MOBUTU'S STANCE TOWARD NEGOTIATIONS REFLECTS HIS PREOCCUPATION WITH ROUTING THE INVADERS AND PROVING SOVIET, CUBAN AND ANGOLAN INVOLVEMENT. ON APRIL 25 HE WAS QUOTED BY ZAIRE'S OFFICIAL

PRESS AGENCY AS ASSERTING: "WE WILL NEGOTIATE TO LEARN WHY THE SOVIET UNION AND CUBA HAVE PUSHED NETO TO FAVOR THIS AGGRESSION." THE INTENSITY OF ANTI-SOVIET RHETORIC HAS INCREASED. MOBUTU ANNOUNCED LAST WEEK ZAIRE'S IMMEDIATE TERMINATION OF CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGES WITH THE USSR, WHILE FOREIGN MINISTER NGUZA WAS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID IN KHARTOUM THAT "ZAIRE HAD NOT YET DECIDED ABOUT SEVERING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE USSR, BUT THE STATE OF ZAIRIAN-SOVIET RELATIONS IS NOW OBVIOUS TO ALL."

6. NGUZA ALSO TRAVELLED TO RIYADH, REPORTEDLY IN PURSUIT OF SUBSTANTIAL SAUDI ASSISTANCE. BOTH SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN APPEAR FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARD AIDING ZAIRE. MOBUTU'S STRATEGY OF FORCING OAU, ARAB AND WESTERN STATES TO CHOOSE SIDES ON HIS TERMS (I.E., ZAIRE VS. SOVIET IMPERIALISM), WHICH HE VIEWS AS HIS BEST HOPE FOR MAXIMIZING MILITARY, POLITICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRE, SEEMS THUS FAR A SUCCESS. WE ARE CONCERNED, HOWEVER, THAT SAUDI OR OTHER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE MAY
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TEMPT MOBUTU TO BYPASS THE IMF STABILIZATION PLAN, AND THEREFORE HOPE THAT PROSPECTIVE NEW DONORS WILL BE PERSUADED TO LINK THEIR AID TO ZAIRE'S PERFORMANCE IN IMPLEMENTING THE IMF AGREEMENT.
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